A

LETTER

TO THE

Biſhop of BANGOR,

Occaſion'd by his Lordſhip's

SERMON

Preach'd before the

KING

AT

St. *James's*, *March* 31, 1717.

BY

ANDREW SNAPE, D. D. Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

DUBLIN:

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over diocese of y^m in matters relating to salvation

BRITISH MUSEUM

This Letter has been followed by a Represen
tation of ye Lower house of Convocation of y^e
province of Canterbury to ye Archbp of
Bps of ye upper-house of ye said Convo
cation declaring ag^st this Sermon as well
as ag^st the book of ye same Author Call'd
the Preservative endeavouring to ju-
prove y^t ye Sermon altogether with y^e
said book Call'd ye Preservative do trun
all sort of Government in ye Church
here on Earth as ag^st ye Sayd Supre
macy over ye Church here on Earth.

The first thing to prove^d they
quote ye Sermon the Words wch they
in Their ye Church of X^t He to these over
the Consciences or Religion of his people
in wch they Animadvert thus

This passage seems to Deny all Authority
to ye Church & under ye pretence of speak
ing ye Words of X^t to Leave it with
any Visible humane Authority to judge
censure, or punish Offenders in ye affairs
of Conscience & Eternal salvation.

Then they Quote these words of ye S.n w^ch
begin. If therefore & do end at these
if any mortal men have such a power
of Legislation & Judgm^t in it. to w^ch
they add these words of ye Sermo p. 13
no one of his Subjects is Lawgiver & Judge
over others in matters relating to Salvation

fro wch they say, if ye Doctrine Contained in
those passages be admitted, there, neither is
nor has been since our Saviours time any Au
thority in ye Xtian Chch, in Matters Relating
to Conscience & Salvation, nor ever in ye Apostles
times Apostles themselves: but all Acts of
Government, in such Cases, have been an invasio
of Xts Authority & an Usurpation upon his Rights
adding wt is Marked p. 3 of ye Serm. beginning
at ye Word We When & ending at ye Word
Wch Words they say, are not restrained to
such Decisions as are inconsistent with ye doctrine
of ye Gospel, as appears not only fro ye gnral
Manner in wch he has expressed himself but
fro his Direct Words Mark p. 7.
Whether those passages say they Exclude ye
sacred writers as well as others, from Making Deci
sions, & interpreting ye Laws of Xt ye Bishops say
they, will judge by a passage of p. 7. &
then they add. Wht a distinctio is made
between ye interpreters of ye written & spoken
Law, ye sacred writers only Can be meant by
the Latter: others have had ye written Law
ye only & all interpreters heard it spoke by
Xt. If this Ld. hip had left us only this Choice
either to Deny ye Authority to interpret ye
N.B. Laws of Xt or to Charge the wth setting up
for ye wch is Opposition to ye Mr
These Doctrines naturally read, say they goth
on, to breed in ye Minds of people a
disregard to those who are appointed to rule
over them. Whether his Lordship has ye
View ye following passages will declare p. 13.
& 16. To ye Doctrines his Lordships description, say ye
of a Chch doth well agree he asserts p. 41

A

LETTER

TO THE

Biſhop of Bangor, *&c.*

My LORD,

HIS Trouble is given your Lordſhip by a Perſon, wholly a Stranger to you, who has very little either of Capacity, Inclination, or Leiſure to engage in Controverſy; and who is firmly perſuaded, from the general Offence, which ſome of your Lordſhip's late Writings have given, that his Cauſe will be undertaken, and the Miſtakes in thoſe Writings ſet in a clear Light, by Perſons much better qualify'd: But who, notwithſtanding all theſe diſſuaſives, cannot prevail with himſelf to ſit as an unconcern'd Spectator, whilſt ſuch Principles are advanc'd, which, in his Apprehenſion, do manifeſtly tend to a Diſſolution of the whole Frame and Conſtitution of that Church, of which he has been many Years an unworthy Miniſter.

I ſhall need no Apology for a Conduct toward your Lordſhip, which is warranted by your own Example. I have certainly the ſame Right to offer my Exceptions to a Sermon of your Lordſhip's, which yourſelf thought fit to aſſume, when but a Presbyter, in cenſuring a Diſcourſe of a late excellent and worthy Prelate, tho' recommended to the World by the like high Authority, to that which now graces your Lordſhip's Title Page.

Your Lordſhip is ſuch an Enemy to Infallibility in others, that undoubtedly you will lay no Claim to it yourſelf; nor preſume that an abſolute Power of interpreting the Laws of Chriſt, is lodg'd in you, ſo as to command the Aſſent of others, any farther than is conſiſtent with their own Reaſon. For my own particular, I have impartially conſulted that ſcanty Portion of it, with which it has pleaſed God to enlighten me in relation to the new and ſtrange Doctrines propagated by your Lordſhip; and as far as I have any Faculty of judging, they appear to me entirely deſtructive of all Order and Government, of all Unity, Peace and Communion in the Church, and contradictory to all thoſe Scriptures which repreſent the Church as a regular and well-compacted Body or Society, and which recommend a Confederacy, Concord and Union among the Members.

I think I ſee the Will of God, otherwiſe than it is repreſented by your Lordſhip; I think it my Duty, and your Lordſhip has taught me, that it is my Right to profeſs and publiſh what I think I ſee: and, by reaſoning upon your Lordſhip's Principles, I might ſatisfy my ſelf, that no Power upon Earth has Authority to reſtrain me from expreſſing my Thoughts with the moſt unbounded Freedom in a Matter of Religion and Conſcience. Notwithſtanding which, I ſhall proceed as with a due Regard to your Epiſcopal Character, with ſome to my own Safety, and not preſume too far that none of the *Engines of this World* would be made Uſe of againſt me, nor the *ſecular* Arm be call'd upon ſhould I happen to break in upon thoſe Privileges and Immunities, within which your Lordſhip is ſo conveni-

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ently entrench'd; or let fall any ſuch unwarrantable and obnoxious Appellation, as my inward Conviction and private Belief might ſuggeſt to me.

I have the Satisfaction of agreeing with your Lordſhip in your introductory Remark. I readily allow, that the Meaning annex'd to certain Words or Sounds, does undergo great Alterations by length of Time, and the ſame Word come, by Degrees, to *ſtand for a Complication of Notions as diſtant from the original Intention of it; nay, as contradictory to it, as Darkneſs is to Light.* I am ſo far from diſputing this Point, that it was once in my Thoughts to have confirm'd your Lordſhip's Obſervation, by ſeveral other Inſtances of Words, that have chang'd their Original Signification, in at leaſt as remarkable a Degree, as any of thoſe Terms alledg'd by your Lordſhip.

But not to waſte the little time I can ſpare, in ſuch a needleſs Digreſſion, let us ſee how your Lordſhip makes good the Point.

The two firſt Inſtances by which your Lordſhip has choſe to exemplify your Obſervation, are theſe, Religion and the Worſhip of God. Which Words I cannot deny to have been too often miſapply'd (as indeed what one Word in the whole Compaſs of Speech has not?) and wreſted to a Meaning very different from what they naturally import. There is no Doubt but there have been, and are too many, who lay too great a Streſs on the external Circumſtantials of Religion, and the Acts of publick Worſhip, *who have the Form of Godlineſs without the Power*, and yet flatter themſelves, and induce others to believe, that they are truly religious Men, and ſincere Worſhippers of God. And if your Lordſhip's Reflexions look no farther than theſe, ſo far we are ſtill agreed. And whatever farther Inſinuations, I and the generality of your Readers may conceive to be couch'd under ſome of the Expreſſions us'd by your Lordſhip, in the Diſcuſſion of theſe two Points, yet as thoſe Expreſſions are capable of an Interpretation different from that, in which we believe you would have them underſtood, I ſhall let them paſs

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as under that innocent and inoffenſive Meaning, and proceed to more obnoxious Paſſages, where there is no room left for any ſuch Evaſion.

At beſt, it muſt be ſaid that your Lordſhip appears very unfavourable to any thing that is external in the Service of God. To make Amends for which, one might at leaſt have expected to meet with a very abundant Zeal, and more than ordinary Concern for that Part of Religion, which is ſeated in the Heart. But when, inſtead of that, we find you ſtriking at the very Root of all Goodneſs, depreciating the ſolemn Duty of Prayer, by ſeparating Devotion from it, which is the Life and Soul of it; How ſhocking is the Diſappointment?

What, my Lord, is Piety become ſo predominant in the Age, that the Exorbitant Growth of it muſt be check'd? and is it to be check'd by ſuch Hands? Does the *Fever* of Devotion rage ſo fiercely, as to ſtand in Need of ſuch cooling Preſcriptions?

The Word [Prayer] *by the Help of Men, and voluminous Rules of Art, is come to ſignify Heat and Flame——in the beſt Diſpoſition in the World, and yet not devout enough to pray: ——Intenſeneſs of Heat——being in a Fever:* Very witty indeed! pretty Ironies in the Mouth of a Chriſtian Biſhop, on ſo ſerious and ſacred a Subject! This, I am ſure, is *touching the very Vitals of all that is Good*, and conſequently, by your Lordſhip's own Allowance, *ought, in Duty, to be reſiſted, with a more open and undiſguiſed Zeal than ordinary.*

Nothing ſure can be more contrary to the whole Stream and Tenour of the ſacred Writings, than what your Lordſhip has taught in this Paragraph, with reference to Prayer. You are pleas'd to call it. *A calm and undiſturb'd Addreſs to God*, and plead our Lord's Directions about it, in Juſtification of your Notion. But no ſuch Direction appears in Scripture. He cautions his Followers indeed againſt vain Repetitions and Oſtentation, when they pray; he cenſures the *Phariſees* for making long Prayers only for a Shew: But where does he ſay, that Prayer muſt be calm and undiſturb'd, or

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uſe any other Expreſſion of the like Importance? Where does he attempt to moderate or aſſwage the Fervour of inward Devotion, or warn his Diſciples againſt making their Requeſts to the Father, with too much Vehemence?

So far from that, that we expreſly read, he ſpake the Parable of the Widow, and the unjuſt Judge, *Luke* xviii. 1. *to this end, that Men ought always to pray, and not to faint*; *i. e.* to be urgent and importunate, and to ſolicite with Earneſtneſs; as farther appears by the Parable of the Man that borrow'd three Loaves of his Friend at Mid-night, *Luk.* xi. 5. by that of the *Publican*, who ſmote upon his Breaſt, in a deep Compunction of Soul, and humble Senſe of his own Unworthineſs, when he conſider'd how great a Sinner he had been: by the Directions he gives them to ask, and ſeek, and knock: From none of which Circumſtances can we be encourag'd to hope, that God will hear our Petitions if they are cold and lifeleſs.

But Prayer, you ſay, in that Form, which our Lord taught his Followers, was *calm and undiſturb'd.* Moſt certainly it was not ſo at the Delivery, tho' it may be attended with thoſe Properties in the Uſe, which depend on the Affection of him that uſes it. Your Lordſhip may be *calm and undiſturb'd*, when you ſay the *Lord's-Prayer*: But I hope there are thoſe, who repeat it with Warmth, and a lively Emotion of Spirit.

But nothing can more convincingly aſſure us, what was our Saviour's Will in this Caſe, than his own Practice. And did he ſatisfy himſelf, when he pray'd with as little Devotion as would content your Lordſhip? Was he quite ſo indolent and unmov'd, *Luk.* xxii. 44. when *being in an Agony he pray'd more earneſtly, and his Sweat was as it were great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground*?

If there needed any farther Proof, I could put your Lordſhip in mind of S. *Pauls* Commendation of *Epaphras*, *Col.* iv. 12. who, he tells the *Coloſſians*, *labour'd fervently* for them in *Prayers*; and of S. *James's* Aſſertion, *Jam.* v. 16. that *the effectual* fervent *Prayer of a righteous Man availeth*

availeth much; with a multitude of other Texts, as full and appoſite, as any that have been cited. And now, pray, my Lord, conſider, how very different a Notion any common Capacity may form upon a Peruſal of theſe Scriptures, from thoſe which your Lordſhip labours to inculcate. 'Tis indeed amazing to me, with what poſſible View you could attempt to found a Doctrine, of a moſt pernicious Tendency in itſelf, on the Ruins of ſo many Texts of Scripture, unleſs it were, to give a Specimen in your own Perſon, of the Fallibility, or ſomething worſe, of humane Interpreters.

Or your Lordſhip might mean perhaps, by thoſe Sarcaſtical Expreſſions above-cited, only to reflect on ſome modern Books of Devotion, that recommend Fervency of Prayer. But whatever was intended by them, they do, in effect, caſt a Diſhonour on thoſe Places of Holy Writ, which I have produced. And I cannot but add, that, had your Lordſhip's Sermon appear'd without ſo venerable a Name in the Front of it; had it been publiſh'd by a conceal'd Author; I ſhould not eaſily have been perſuaded, but that Expreſſion, *Intenſeneſs of Heat*, had been a deſign'd Burleſque on what is ſaid of our Saviour, in his Agony, that he prayed more earneſtly [or intenſely] your Lordſhip knows how it is in the Original, ἐκτενέστερον προσηύχετο.

Will it be alledg'd, that what appears ſo Offenſive in this Paragraph, is moderated by thoſe qualifying Phraſes, *in ſuch a manner*, and *to ſuch a Degree*, that your Lordſhip does not abſolutely make a Jeſt of all *Heat and Flame* in Prayer, but only of Enthuſiaſtick Raptures? Alas! How few of your Readers will ſo underſtand you? How many that are not aware of the Niceties of Pointing, will (as the Turn of the Period naturally enclines them) make a fuller Pauſe at the Word *Flame*, than the Comma directs them to do; will ſuppoſe the Sentence to be half over there, and to end, where indeed it is ended, (notwithſtanding the Fallacy of a wrong Stop) with the Word *pray*?

How your Lordſhip manag'd in the Pronunciation, I can only gueſs; but I am ſure that Period may be ſo pro-

pronounc'd, that those Clauses, *in such a Manner*, and *to such a Degree*, shall not be thought to limit, but to confirm and aggravate what went before.

Your Lordship plainly opposes *Heat and Flame* to that *Calmness and Undisturbedness* with which you would have our Addresses to God accompanied: And if you had meant to allow of any the smallest Degree of Fervour, or godly Transport, that might disorder that Tranquility, and put the Soul into any kind of Agitation; it had been fair, and sure it was highly requisite, to have told us how far your Concessions extended. Could not one Line be afforded, in a Case of so much Consequence, to guard against Mistakes, and to satisfy us, in proper and direct Terms, that you did not mean to stifle all pious Breathings of the Soul, nor totally to extinguish all Sparks of Devotion? But, in Truth, as the Matter is represented by your Lordship, there are many who so apprehend you; and who cannot conceive how, according to your Lordship's Dictates, there can be any room left, for Elevation of Thought, in contemplating the Majesty of God; for the Acts of Shame and Abhorrence, and godly Contrition, when we are humbled with a Sense of our Guilt; for a sprightly Joy and Exultation under the Assurance of Pardon; for grateful Ejaculations, when we reflect on God's Mercies: Nay, not even for the Hope of everlasting Bliss, or the Fear of everlasting Misery. Our Passions must all be stupified, and every Power of our Souls lie dormant and becalm'd, for fear of discomposing that easy Serenity with which your Lordship would have us pray.

What Influence your Doctrines will have, or what Adherent you will gain over, I am not able to fore-see: But I hope the Number will not be very large, of those who will think it advisable to list themselves in your Lordship's new Sect of *Protestant Quietists*.

As for what you say of the *Love of God*, which is the next of those perverted Words you instance in: Tho' your Lordship has set it as low as possible, and seem particularly careful, that Men may not offend in the Excess of this, or any Thing else that is good; yet as

there have been well-meaning Men, who have over-ſtrain'd that Duty, and amus'd themſelves and others with unneceſſary Scruples, I ſhall ſuppoſe your Lordſhip's Reflexions to be level'd againſt them, and not ſtay to adjuſt the Difference between your Lordſhip and them.

And now are we come to the laſt of theſe Words or Sounds, the Miſ-uſe whereof has given your Lordſhip ſo much Offence; that myſterious, inexplicable Phraſe, ſo full of inconſiſtent Images, *the Church of Chriſt*. This *Church of Chriſt*, according to your Lordſhip, *is the Kingdom of Chriſt*, and a Kingdom of which he is himſelf, not only the ſole King, but the ſole Lawgiver, the ſole Judge, the ſole Interpreter of his own Laws; a Kingdom in which he neither acts himſelf, nor has inveſted any one elſe with an Authority to act for him. And you are pleas'd to infer, *Pag.* 13. by one of the oddeſt Conſequences that ever was drawn from any Propoſition, that *becauſe* he never interpoſes himſelf, *therefore* he has left no Deputy: Which if he did interpoſe, there would certainly be no Occaſion for; but at his Departure into Heaven, when he was no longer to govern his Church in Perſon, he provided for the good Government of it, by others whom he commiſſion'd to teach and expound his Laws, to bear Rule and Authority over his Subjects, to be his Vice-gerents, to act in his Name and Stead, and to perpetuate a Succeſſion of Men thro' all the ſucceeding Ages of the World, in whom the ſame Powers ſhould be lodged. And tho' he made none of them infallible, nor exempted them from humane Frailties, yet ſtill he requir'd his Church to obey them, and to be guided by their Inſtructions, where they were not contrary to his. The Places of Scripture that prove theſe Aſſertions, are ſo numerous, and ſo well known to your Lordſhip, that it is needleſs to tranſcribe them.

And indeed, had he made no Proviſion for the orderly and regular Government of his Subjects, either by interpoſing himſelf, or by his Spirit working in them, not by the ordinary Operations, as at preſent, but

last Words of y^is paragraph, or rather sentence...
where they were not Contrary to it. do entirely
destroy w^t ye Author writes here & Confirm
w^t ye Bn writes for, here how he speaks p. 7.
he has left, behind him, no Visible humane Autho
rity; No Vicegerents no intermeters, upon Whom
his Subjects are Absolutely to Depend. Absolutely
Word wch excludes all Vicegerents Authority to
wch is Absolute, as he does repeat after no Less
than twice. it excludes an Authority which
pretend to a Power of Making New Laws w^ch
Equally obligatory with his owne Equally. wh
Manifestly Suppose y^t ye Bn does not exclude
another Authority of Making New Laws wch
Same be not Equally obligatory. & Absolutely obliging
this is much more plain in ye very place wch the
Author does find fault with. for here how he i
Mean ye Bn does express himselfe he never inter
posed since his first promulgation of his Law, either
to Convey infallibility to such as pretend to
handle it over again; or to Assert ye true interpre
tation of it. amidst ye Various, & Contradictory

"opinions of men about it. if he did certainly the
"interpose (take Notice) he himself would still
"ye Legislator. but as he dos not, if such an Abso
"Authority (take Notice still) be once Lodged with
"under ye Notion of interpreters, they then becom
"ye Legislators.

'y^t this Confirms w^t has been observed y^t ye bp excludes
'other authority but such as is absolute is plain. for
it be Confessed, as it is, y^t none of ye interpreters
ye Apostles be infallible, & if it cannot be deni
y^t among ye Various & Contradictory Opinions
ye king of his Kgdo, ye head of his Church, did
never interpose an Arrest y^t of ye Contrary opi
ions wch is ye true one it is plain y^t the interp
tations of any of the interpreters being not supposed
by infallibility & much less by a Manifest and
visible assertion of any of ye interpretations b
J.C. it is plain y^t those interpretations &
any of y^m do not emanate from an Absolute
authority. Where be Obligatory; but, as this w
ter says, Where they are not Contrary
sit i.e. to those of Christ. so y^t, as I said
those very do destroy w^t he writ. before
& Confirm w^t he opposed in ye bp
ye Next paragraph beginning at ye end of y^e
going page by ye words and Indeed. dos
exclude Nothing ag^st ye bp who has not said
It has made no provision for ye ordery
"Regular Government of his Subjects" but
none Can Understand to be under him a Lawgi
or even an Interpreter, with an absolu
Authority
on ye paragraph of ye p. wch begins. If K^t Ow
& Lawgiver &c. by bp dr^g dos not all th
-sity but an Absolute one. & I see ye Ca
keep himself from Venting some notions w
do not perfectly agree with ye Art. of ye C
of Eng^d much Less with those of ye Ch
Ireland ye 20 Art of Eng^d dos not speak of
irresistible Grace or rather dos not use y^t

but in as full and ample Measures, as in the Apostles Days; or by substituting Vice-gerents to act for and under him, to satisfy the Doubts of his People, and explain the Meaning of his Laws, by comparing them with one another, to restrain Offenders, and keep in Awe the Disturbers of its Peace and Unity; I say, if no Care had been taken, by some one of these Ways, to keep his Subjects in Order; the Church of Christ must have been a *Babel*, and his Kingdom a Realm of Confusion.

If Christ our King and Law giver, who is All-wise, Unerring, All-sufficient, had been pleas'd to act personally in his own Government, or had he thought fit to have conducted his Subjects by the Guidance of irresistable Grace; there would then have been no need of inferior Magistrates. But as neither of these is the Case; in his Kingdom, as well as the Kingdoms of this World, there must be, and there is a Subordination of Ministers, who are the Judges and Guides of his People, by vertue of an Authority, that he has delegated to them.

Let us consider the Church under any other of those Images, by which it is represented in Scripture, and we shall find that they all combine to give us an Idea of it, as of an orderly and well govern'd Society. Sometimes it is figur'd to us, under the Similitude of a natural Body: But does that consist of disjointed Members, loosely put together, and connected by no Sinews or Ligaments? no more can the Spiritual Body, without Rules and Orders, which are the Bands and Ligaments of Society. We are often said to be united in one Body under Christ our Head: *Eph.* iv. 15, 16. *from whom the whole Body fitly join'd together, and compacted by that, that every Joint supplieth, according to the Effectual Working, in the Measure of every Part, maketh Increase of the Body, unto the edifying it self in Love.* And He who is our Head, ver. 11, 12. *gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of* His *Body.*

Take the Church as a Building: as ſuch it is call'd, 1 *Pet.* ii. 5. *Eph.* ii. 20. *One Spiritual Houſe, built upon the Foundation of Prophets and Apoſtles, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner-Stone.* And Chriſtians are compared to a *Building fitly fram'd, growing to an Holy Temple in the Lord,* *Eph.* ii. 21. Can a Heap of uncemented Stones compoſe ſuch a Building fitly fram'd? No more can a Number of Men, calling themſelves Chriſtians, but under no Body's Governance or Direction, compoſe a Spiritual Edifice. Can a material Fabrick be of long Duration, with no one to ſurvey it, to repair its Breaches, and prevent its Decay? No more could the Building of Chriſt's Church. Let us look upon the Body of Chriſtians, as the Members of a large Houſhold or Family. In that there muſt be Stewards, and other governing Servants of different Degrees, to preſerve a good OEconomy. Let us conſider them as Soldiers fighting under Chriſt's Banner, and there we ſhall ſee Occaſion for General and Subaltern Officers. And the Caſe will be ſtill the ſame, if you take a View of the Church, under any other Image.

But what am I doing? Am I labouring to convince one of the Governors of Chriſt's Church, of the higheſt Order, that Chriſt has left a Power of Governing? Very ſorry I am for the unhappy Neceſſity, but your Lordſhip has made it neceſſary for me. For either I am incapable of underſtanding the Meaning of Words, or your Lordſhip diſowns the Legality of thoſe Powers, which at the ſame time you continue to exerciſe. This you appear to me to do in many Places, but particularly in the following Paſſage, *Pag.* 12. *Nay, whoever hath an*——— *Authority to interpret any written, or ſpoken Laws; it is he, who is truly the Lawgiver, to all intents and Purpoſes; and not the Perſon, who firſt wrote and ſpoke them.* Conſequently, when your Lordſhip, or any other Miniſter, preſumes to explain the Laws of Chriſt, he makes himſelf the Lawgiver, and does what you condemn thro' your whole Sermon, uſurp an Authority, that belongs to Chriſt alone. And if ſuch be our Caſe, we have nothing more to do but to throw up our Orders, ſince the Church

but it says w^t hast a mouth & there w^t it says ye Condition of man After ye fall of Adā is such w^t he cannot turn & prepare himself to faith & Calling upon God with^t the grace of God by Christ preventing but ye 9th Art. of ye same faith under K E was more express the holy Ghost Which given by Christ doe take fro Man ye heart of Stone & give him a heart of flesh & though he rendreth us willing to do those good works W^ch before we were unwilling to do: & unwilling to do those evil Works wch before we did; yet it no Violence offered by it to ye will of Man & the Art before ye 10th of Eng^d doe expresse this very strongly thus that Man by his own Nature is enclined to evil but ye 9th ye 22 23 24 & 25th of ye Church of Irel^d doe expresse this impossibility of Conversion with no less energy & y^t though irresistible grace be not used in the conversion of however it is plain y^t it is to be understood God forbid from their disputants who make use of ye prejudices of Mankind to turn them aside from ye truth

further in ye paragraph over ag^t y^t is If in ye rest of this Discourse to ye very ig^rance doe Assault ye restriction or Limitation wch he has added to his proposition viz Absolute wch he pretends to avail Nothing to this end he Quotes a sentence of ye 7 p. of ye Sermon wch ye Reader May see over ag^t this in Italick Letters with^t that word Absolute If he pretends y^t ye sentence avails as much as if y^t word of limitation Absolute was not there If by that omission doe ridicule ye opp as if by y^t sentence he had established that No person has a Right power or authority to interpret ye Scripture to others &c

In ye Next paragraph he doe expatiate upon y^t Word absolute as needless it being supposed by all men y^t there is no absolute Authority upon earth Mankind supposing y^t we must obey

God rather then to ye Pope & yt he Comes to
ye sentence of the bp writt there in Italick
Letter by wch he pretends to proove yt the
Bp has deprived himself of the benefit he
could reap of that Limitation & here is ye
sentence wch may be found in my 2d pt of
Sermon Verbatim thus
And Whether they (who Assume this power of
Deciding) happen to agree with him i.e.
or to Differ from him (xt) as long as they
are y Lawgivers & Judges with any
interposition from xt, either to guide or
cut their decisions, they are Kings of this
& not xt's &c.
this ye Author pretends to Destroy ye Limitation
of ye Word Absolute & y ye Bp must
have understood some other thing than abso
ye & absolutely can mean but let ye
Reader take ye Whole paragraph & see
himself yt ye sense of ye Bp be not
yt if those who pretend to have a power to
interpret xt his Laws to add to them
& to Judge men about them so yt
Christians be indispensably & Absolutely
obliged to obey the whole Law & to submitt to the
Decision
Decision though they should carry
xt they should be however for
Christians be indispensably & absolutely
obliged to submit to those Laws it is plain
yt it ought to be not because they are
Ordained by them but by J.C. & that
so much as they are ordained by them

agreeing or not agreeing with those of Xt
they ought not to be indispensably & absolutely
obeyed for we are to obey Christ not Man
in Matters of Conscience
this to imitate ye writer if we are to obey
our spiritual & temporal Superiors in all things
Lawfull those Lawfull things are not to be
indispensably & absolutely obeyed because
they are Commanded by them for if their
Authority should fail so y^t We ought
Absolutely & indispensably to obey in Law-
full things their Authority being the
same in all they ought to be obeyed
in unlawfull
Conscience knows no M^r but one Wch is God
& whosoever We are not tied to Command Con-
science do not obey the Command but ye thing
Commanded if Lawfull Christ.

Chuch has no need of us, ſince we not only do no Service, but are guilty of a criminal Uſurpation.

But your Lordſhip may fancy you have a *Salvo* in Reſerve: You may tell me that the Sentence I refer to, as well as many others in your Diſcourſe, is guarded with the Word *abſolute*. I am aware of it, my Lord; I have left a Blank for it in my Quotation, which (as I am going to prove) will ſignify juſt as much, and be as entirely available to your Lordſhip's Purpoſe, as if the Word ſtood there at full Length.

The plain and known Import of the Word *abſolute*, is, unlimited, unconditional, not clogg'd or reſtrain'd by any one Exception or Reſerve. And in this Senſe indeed, it may truly be affirm'd, that no Power or Authority upon Earth is *abſolute*. There is one Exception, and there is but one, by which our Obedience to all Earthly Governors muſt be bounded. And that is, that their Commands be not diſagreeable to the Laws of Chriſt. If Kings themſelves enjoin things contrary to the Word of God, we are to obey God rather than Man. If the Miniſters of Chriſt, in their perſonal Capacity, teach Doctrines repugnant to the Scriptures, they are not to be hearken'd to. If the Collective Body of the Clergy, legally aſſembled, agree upon any Determinations or Deciſions, if they frame any Articles or Canons contrary to what we are taught in the Holy Scriptures; they cannot bind the Conſcience. And if this had been the Saving, which your Lordſhip had in View, and what you had intended to provide for, wherever you have inſerted the Word *abſolute*; many of the offenſive Paſſages, with which your Sermon every where abounds might have been alleviated, tho' a great deal of Offence would ſtill have remain'd.

But, my Lord, you have cut yourſelf off from any Benefit of that Plea. We are ſure you did not mean to make the *Unlawfulneſs* of human Deciſions the Ground of your denying the Authority, by which they were decreed; becauſe you have told us ſo yourſelf. That, it ſeems, is a Matter of ſmall Moment, and does not weigh with your Lordſhip at all. For you tell us in ſo many

Words

Words, *Page* 15. that the Caſe is the ſame, *whether they* [who aſſume this Power of deciding] *happen to agree with* Chriſt, *or to differ from him.* Still, *as long as they are they Lawgivers and Judges, without any Interpoſition of Chriſt, either to guide or correct their Deciſions, they are Kings of this Kingdom, and not Chriſt Jeſus.* Nothing can be more evident, than that, whatever latent Reſerve your Lordſhip intends by the Word *abſolute*; it is not that, which alone can qualify the Groſſneſs of your Aſſertions. Your *abſolutely* had gone before in that very Sentence; where it cannot be pretended to be taken in the Senſe, which you in the ſame Breath diſclaim: And one may very reaſonably inferr, that you meant juſt as much by it, wherever it occurs.

Thus, while we are taught by the Goſpel, to obey the Commands both of our Spiritual and Temporal Superiors, in all things lawful; we are taught by your Lordſhip to receive no Commands from any Superiors, whether Spiritual or Temporal, whether in Caſes lawful or unlawful, in Matters relating to Conſcience.

I perſuade myſelf, I ſhall not be thought in any thing that has been ſaid, to have put any Force upon your Lordſhips Words, or miſinterpreted your Meaning. I am ſure, I have not done it wilfully, I have only urged what I conceive to be, and what I think muſt appear to others, a very natural Deduction from your own Tenents.

But to make it more fully manifeſt, that I have done you no wrong, I can appeal to other Places of your Sermon, where you have advanc'd the ſame Notion in more undiſguis'd and peremptory Terms, without mincing or palliating, without the leaſt Guard of Caution. But particularly in the following Sentence in the 14th Page.

" If any Man upon Earth have a Right to add to the
" Sanctions of his [Chriſt's] Laws; that is, to increaſe
" the Number, or alter the Nature of the Rewards and
" Puniſhments of his Subjects, in Matters of Conſcience
" and Salvation; they are ſo far King's in his Stead
" and reign in their own Kingdom, and not in *His.*

Author in my Opinion, wrongs ye by her sorry
Prince ought to be scanned by ye examples ye by
Deeds of wch are to creat (Fortunate to determine
ye points to be Determined but by one who knows ye
Events. or others, they Determine abt things wch
may Affect ye Subject wth Regard to ye favour
of God wch are nothing to ye favours of Princes
towards ym who adhere to their Religion for

speaking of Tribunals erected to Exercise Judgmen
over ye Consciences of Men & of Determinations
of points not to be Determined but by one wh
knows ye hearts; it is plain yt it has no Relati
to affairs ordered by Princes who judge of deed
not of thoughts & so ye Decisions or declaration
wch Affect ye state of ye Subject, with Regard t
ye favour of God the like they are not ye pro
of Civil Magistrats ye first wherein I cann
Guess wt ye Author aims at but ye Leand Le
to me be such Declarations as were pu
shed formerly by ye Pope at ye Croisades
or now for ye Jubilees

A very daring Aſſeveration indeed! *If any Man upon Earth* have ſuch a Right, &c. that is to ſay, if any King, Parliament, State or Potentate, or any Earthly Power whatſoever, ſhall encourage Religion by any Temporal Rewards, or diſcourage it by any Temporal Penalties, they uſurp the Dominion of Chriſt, and dethrone him from his Spiritual Kingdom.

This bears very hard indeed on the Acts for preventing *Occaſional Conformity* and *Schiſm*, and let us ſuppoſe the Argument were to have its Effect towards the reverſing of them: How does your Lordſhip know it will ſtop teere? How can you be ſure that the Enemies of our Conſtitution will not borrow it of you, aud apply it to their own Purpoſes? For if it were true, that no Men upon Earth have a Power of enacting Laws with penal or promiſſory Sanctions in Matter of Conſcience, this would equally ſtrike at all the incapacitating Laws in Force, not only againſt Proteſtant Diſſenters, but Papiſts too: Neither the one, nor the other, it ſeems, are to be laid under ſuch excluſive Forfeitures, or *negative Diſcouragements*. Chriſt's Kingdom is not of this World, and none of the *Engines of this World* are to be employ'd either for, or againſt his Subjects.

The very Acts that ſecure the Proteſtant Succeſſion, and have made it impracticable for any Papiſt to aſcend the Throne, excluding for ever all of that Perſuaſion from ſuch Claim, as they might otherwiſe have a legal Title to, for no other Demerit, but purely for the ſake of their Religion, muſt by this Reaſon be overthrown.

Nay, the very Act of Settlement, by vertue of which his preſent Majeſty poſſeſſes the Crown, would ſtand upon no better a Foot; wherein it is provided, as one of the Limitations, *That whoſoever ſhall hereafter come to the Poſſeſſion of this Crown, ſhall join in Communion with the* Church of England, *as by Law eſtabliſhed.*

Will your Lordſhip deny that a Crown is a Temporal Reward? Will you ſay that the Loſs and Forfeiture of a Crown is not a Temporal Penalty? Can you pretend that being of this or that Religion is not a

Matter

Matter of Conſcience and Salvation? And is it not notorious that the moſt ſolemn Laws of this Realm have made the Enjoyment or Loſs of a Crown the Reward or Penalty of one, or the other Religion? What remains then? Why, either your Lordſhip muſt ſay, as hitherto you do, that they had no Right to annex ſuch Temporal Sanctions to religious Concerns; (which if you will venture to ſpeak out, I muſt leave you to the Animadverſion of the Higher Powers) or you will be under a Neceſſity of retracting that raſh and dogmatical Aſſertion, deliver'd in ſuch crude and general Terms, in the Paſſage I have lately cited.

In the mean Time, let me ask your Lordſhip; would it not have become ſo zealous an Advocate for the *Revolution*, who has formerly declared, that he *lov'd the very Ground on which it ſtood*; to have put in one Word of Exception, in Favour of it? Was it fit for one ſo highly favour'd by his Majeſty King *George*, to preach ſuch Doctrine in his Preſence, as, in its Conſequences, tends to the weakening his Royal Title; Might it not have been expected from ſo *true a Proteſtant*, whatever Indulgence, he had ſhewn to others, to have found out ſome Diſtinction, to fetch in *Papiſts* at leaſt within the Reach of *Negative Diſcouragements*? But not a Syllable, not a Hint is there to that Purpoſe. Nay, I cannot help obſerving, that in the whole Compaſs of your Lordſhip's Sermon, there is not the leaſt Glance, that ſeems to be aim'd at Popery in Particular, which conſidering the Subject, one would think, could not well have been avoided. No, your Lordſhip, I muſt needs ſay, has dealt your Favours, with a very equal and undiſtinguiſhing Hand, to all Churches, and all Religions.

Such are the dangerous Conſequences ariſing from your Lordſhip's Poſitions, that ſeem, to me, to affect the State. Let me beg your Lordſhip's Patience while I mention ſome that concern the Church; I ſolemnly profeſs that the whole Drift of your Argument appears to my View, to be level'd not againſt any one particular Branch of our Eſtabliſhment, but againſt the whole

Frame

Frame and Syſtem of it at once: Nay, not only againſt the Polity of the *Church of England*, but againſt all Eccleſiaſtical Polity whatever. If your Lordſhip's Reaſonings are right, there never was any Part of the Catholick Church, either in the Days of the Apoſtles, or at any time ſince, in any Nation of the World, that has not, as a Church, acted in direct Oppoſition to the Will of our bleſſed Saviour, and uſurp'd an Authority, that he had never delegated. All who have been interpreting his Laws, have been making Laws for him. All impos'd Terms of Communion, according to your Lordſhip, are ſinful; nor can any Number of wiſe and good Men, agreeing together in the ſame Notions, and aſſembled by legal Authority, in due Subordination to the Civil Magiſtrate, tho' with the moſt unanimous Conſent, eſtabliſh any Rules, or ordain any Method of Church-Government, that ſhall be binding, even for Peace and Quiet's ſake, to any others.

Thus all Articles and Creeds are deſtroy'd at once, which were ſettled by Men ſo aſſembled. All Acts of General Councils were void and null from the Beginning. Nay, even the Decrees of the Council at *Jeruſalem*, held by the Apoſtles themſelves, were never of any Force; they ſat there as Uſurpers, they never had a Right to make any Laws, which belongs ſolely and peculiarly to their KING *Chriſt Jeſus*. All, without Exception, who have ever gather'd themſelves together in a Synodical Meeting, to join in the framing ſuch Canons, Rules or Ordinances, as have been thought proper to oblige others to a Unity of Profeſſion, are, in your Lordſhip's Notion, no better than Invaders of Chriſt's Kingdoms, Erectors of an illegal Tribunal, and Exerciſers of an Authority, that never was committed to them.

Upon theſe Principles, I do not ſee how your Lordſhip can offer to take your Place in the Provincial Synod: How you can require Subſcriptions or Declarations of thoſe whom you Ordain, or exerciſe almoſt any Act of Epiſcopal Juriſdiction.

The Church was bid to prepare for a State of Perſecution, and ſuch a one it ſeverely ſmarted under: But it was to have a flouriſhing Eſtate likewiſe: Kings, in due time, were to be its Nurſing Fathers, and Queens its Nurſing Mothers. And are the Rulers of the Earth now to be told, that it is Criminal in them to defend the Church? That to ſupport it by any Temporal Encouragements, or to reſtrain the Enemies of it by any Temporal Penalties, is acting out of their Sphere, and affecting a Dominion in Chriſt's Spiritual Kingdom?

Your Lordſhip, *Page* 29. ſpeaks of ſome *Pretenſions, which would have prevented all Reformation, where it hath been, and will for ever prevent it, where it is not already*, May we not ſay, that your Lordſhip's Scheme has a natural Tendency, to deſtroy all Reformation, where it is already, and for ever to prevent a ſecond Return of it? For ſuppoſe that *glorious Confuſion* ſhould take Effect, which your Lordſhip ſeems to have an Eye to: Suppoſe the Influence of Earthly Powers to be withdrawn, the Fences of the Church thrown down, no religious Qualifications any longer inſiſted on; but Perſons of every Denomination, equally capable of all Promotions; What do you imagine the Conſequence might be? According to this Project, every Sort of Men might have their Turn of being uppermoſt, and *Papiſts* as well as others; and if once it came to that, Does your Lordſhip know them ſo little? Can you be ſo unacquainted with their Zeal and Polity, as not to foreſee, that it would not be long before they would ſet up new Fences excluſive of us? With all Honour and Reſpect to the happy Reformation I ſpeak it; the Preachers, who firſt began it, argu'd moſt convincingly; the Martyrs ſuffer'd glorioufly; but the deſirable Work was not completed, till the Earthly Rulers, being themſelves converted, eſtabliſh'd and confirm'd it by Temporal Sanctions.

I am prevented, by a very neceſſary Avocation, from offering ſome other Matters to your Lordſhip's Conſideration, and particularly from comparing your preſent Doctrines with what you have formerly taught. But I

ſhall

re i wonder at ye worthy Writer not to acknowled
t w^t ye Bp writes to be true. w^t ye force put
ion some to profess w^t they believe not & w^t they cannot
believe & upon others to forbear ye open profession of
w^t they do believe was a Means y^t prevented ye Re
formation where it is now & will prevent it where it
is not. is not ye writer some thing bashfull to tell
ye ye truths of ye Bp w^t he & all the brethren are
forced to do, ag^t their will, ag^t papists.

ſhall ſtay to offer your Lordſhip once Piece of Advice; that in the next Impreſſion of your Sermon, you would not ſuffer your Bookſeller to expoſe you, by advertiſing your *Reaſonableneſs of Conformity* at the Back of it. If your Lordſhip thinks fit to ſtand to your new Principles, you have Reaſon to be aſham'd of that Book, and in all good Policy ſhould labour to ſuppreſs it, which contains Doctrines as oppoſite to thoſe you now teach, *as Light is to Darkneſs*: Nay, as oppoſite as your Lordſhip's preſent Practice is to your former reſiſting Doctrines. I am,

My LORD,

Your Lordſhip's, &c.

FINIS.